



### ACTIVITY: Play Personality

#### Purpose

- Understand why play is important and the connection to being resilient – even for adults!
- Identify our play personality
- Reflect on how to incorporate our play personality throughout our day

#### ESTIMATED TIME

**10** minutes

#### MATERIALS

##### Required:

- A. attached activity sheet
- B. pen

#### Background

We are just now beginning to appreciate the importance of play, how deeply ingrained it is in each of us and how necessary it is for overall human competency. Research explained by Steve Sivy in the American Journal of Play makes it clear that play, in its many manifestations, serves a wide variety of survival-promotion functions: stress management, overall competency, learning, emotional regulation, innovation, and social cooperation.

Understanding the nature and importance of play is especially vital in today's world. There is good reason to believe that restrictions on play are harmful to children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development. This restriction of play is not limited to children - in fact, the need for adult and senior play throughout our lifetimes remains profoundly important for the many reasons listed above and is important to combating the daily stress both children and adults encounter. Clinical observations reinforce that play can be a source of resilience even in the face of serious adversity.

This is fantastic place to start – time to figure out your play personality! Based on research in neuroscience and natural behaviors observed in animal and human behaviors, Dr. Stuart Brown indicates that we have 8 different play personalities. Knowing and understanding your play personality can help you unlock not only what you are passionate about, but how that passion can manifest in your adult life. While it may not be possible for everyone to find a job that aligns perfectly with their preferred method of play, everyone can find ways to integrate play into their adult lives, which can help create a more fulfilling life.

### Activity

1. Explain the key points of why play is important – even for adults!
2. Pass out the attached activity sheet.
3. Ask your team to reflect on play they enjoyed as a child and play they enjoy as an adult, part 1 of the activity sheet (allow 2-3 minutes for reflecting).
4. Navigate to part 2 of the activity sheet – ask they read through each of the 8 play personalities, rate the degree to which each of those personalities resonate with them. Encourage them to refer to what they reflected on in the previous section.
5. Ask your team to identify their top 2 play personalities.

### Discussion Questions

- How would incorporating more play improve your resiliency?
- How can you carve out more time to make play a priority?
- How can you add play to what you are already doing?
- What obstacles may get in the way of play? What can you do to remove them or work around them?

### Let's Try This!

If you have time, ask everyone to share their top play personalities and specific examples of things they enjoy in each! You never know if this can help spark opportunities for team members to connect in or outside of work!

### Follow-up

Ask team members how they have sprinkled play into their work or outside of work as a result of the activity.

- If they were successful, ask them if they have noticed positive improvements in their lives (socially, physically, emotionally, etc.)
- If they didn't add more play to their day, ask them what has gotten in the way and what they think they can do about it.

**Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul**, 2010. Dr. Stuart Brown.

**The Science of Play: How Play Helps Us Develop Resilience.** Website: <https://www.playcore.com/news/how-play-helps-us-develop-resilience>



# RESILIENCY



Optimism


*How I... see things*

## ACTIVITY: Play Personalities

### Part One: Reflecting on Play

Think back to when you were a child, before all of your adult responsibilities crept into your life. What was the thing or things you would do for hours on end? Write those in the space below.

Think about the current day, what things do you today that you really enjoy, things where you almost “lose yourself” or lose track of time doing? Write those in the space below.



## ACTIVITY: Play Personalities

### Part Two: Identify Your Play Personalities

Read all 8 play personalities below (from Stuart Brown's research). Many of us have a mix of these play personalities. Use the space next to the play personality types to rank how much each resonates with you. Use a scale from 1-5 (1 = doesn't resonate at all, 5 = resonates a great deal). Look at what you wrote in the reflection section on the previous page. Identify your top 2 play personalities.

\_\_\_ **The Joker** - play revolves around silliness and making others laugh. Joker's tend to be the "class clown" in school, and may engage in play through telling jokes, doing funny impersonations, or playing practical jokes.

\_\_\_ **The Kinesthete** - play is through movement. They experience pleasure in movement and feeling the result of physically pushing their bodies. While this category may include athletes, competition is not the focus; the joy of engaging in the activity takes precedence. Some examples include running, dancing, sports, yoga, swimming, hiking or walking.

\_\_\_ **The Explorer** - play by exploring the world around them. Play can be physical (going to new places), emotional (search for a deepening of emotion through music, art or movement), or mental (researching a new area of interest or reading a book).

\_\_\_ **The Competitor** - play through competitive games with specific rules and enjoys the thrill of winning. The games can be solitary, such as trying to beat his/her top score in a video game, or social, such as competing in a team sport. Competitor's may also play through being a fan of competitive sports.

\_\_\_ **The Director** - play through planning and executing events. They are the organizers of the social world and may be the instigators of a road trip or throwing a party or organizing a meet-up.

\_\_\_ **The Collector** - play through engaging in seeking and holding onto the most, best and most interesting collection of objects or experiences. They experience bliss in finding a new piece/experience, organizing or showing off their collection. Examples include coins, purses, shoes, cars, or photographs (the possibilities are endless!)

\_\_\_ **The Artist/Creator** - play through creating and making things. The Artist/Creator may engage in drawing, building or sculpting, painting, singing, knitting, gardening, woodworking, or any number of creative endeavors. The Artist/Creator may also take joy in fixing or making something work, like taking a part a broken item, cleaning and replacing parts, and putting it back together again.

\_\_\_ **The Storyteller** - play through adventure into the imagination. They may enjoy reading novels, writing, or watching movies and theater. Storytellers enjoy being immersed in a story, experiencing the thoughts and emotions of characters in the stories.

**What now?** It is important is finding a way to reconcile what you *must* do and what you *want* to do each day — then carve out room for play, focusing on the type of play you find most meaningful. Let's make play a priority and sprinkle a little throughout each day!